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27 Chinese Nationals Arrested in Clark Crypto Scam Bust

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Philippine authorities arrested 27 Chinese nationals and rescued eight Filipino women in a coordinated pre-dawn operation targeting an alleged cryptocurrency scam hub and illegal offshore gaming site in the Clark Freeport Zone, Central Luzon.

The raids, carried out early Tuesday, were led by the Police Regional Office 3 (PRO3) in partnership with the Bureau of Immigration (BI) and military intelligence units. The first

operation took place around 2 a.m. at the Asian Greenville Resort in Barangay Jose Abad Santos, Mabalacat City. Authorities said 24 Chinese nationals, 22 men and two women, were apprehended on suspicion of running an online crypto-based investment scam from the premises.

During the raid, officers also discovered eight Filipino women who are believed to have been forced or recruited to participate in the scheme. The women were taken into protective custody and are receiving assistance from social services.

Roughly an hour later, a second raid was conducted at a residential unit in Clark Hills Village D. This led to the arrest of three additional Chinese nationals allegedly involved in phishing operations and other forms of cyber-enabled fraud. Investigators seized dozens of computer workstations, smartphones, and electronic devices, which have been sent for forensic examination to uncover digital evidence of illicit activities.

According to PRO3, the operations were carried out under separate mission orders issued by the Bureau of Immigration's Fugitive Search Unit. The mission aimed to dismantle both cybercrime operations and illegal Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (Pogos) operating in the region.

PRO3 Regional Director Brig. Gen. Ponce Rogelio Peñones Jr. lauded the arrests as a significant step in combating transnational cybercrime networks.

These operations are a testament to our intensified campaign against transnational cybercrimes and illegal Pogo activities, Peñones said in a statement. We are sending a clear message that Central Luzon is not a haven for scammers and exploiters. We will continue to work relentlessly to protect our communities and extend appropriate support to those exploited by these syndicates.

Authorities believe the arrested individuals were part of an organised network targeting investors through fraudulent cryptocurrency investment platforms and other online financial scams. Such schemes often involve luring victims with promises of high returns before siphoning funds through complex digital transactions, making recovery difficult.

The raids in Clark come amid a broader national effort to curb cyber-enabled crimes and illegal offshore gaming operations in the Philippines. Over recent years, the country has seen a surge in such activities, often linked to foreign syndicates using local facilities as

operational hubs. These crimes have been associated with human trafficking, forced labour, and the exploitation of local workers in addition to financial fraud.

Police say further charges will be filed against the suspects, who are currently in custody pending immigration and criminal proceedings. Investigations are ongoing to identify other members of the network, trace the flow of illicit funds, and determine the full extent of the operation's reach.